February 9, 2026

Kelly S. Baccaro, Clerk of the Board/FOIL Officer
Columbia County Board of Supervisors
401 State Street
Hudson, NY 12534

Dear Ms. Baccaro:

Pursuant to the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law, Article 6, Sections 84-90), I respectfully request access to and copies of the following records related to the property at 509 Bashford Road, Town of Chatham (Tax ID: 14.-1-52, SWIS #102689), and its inclusion into Columbia County Agricultural District #10 under Agriculture and Markets Law Section 303-b.

PART I: 303-b APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

1. The complete 303-b application submitted during the October 2025 annual enrollment period requesting inclusion of the above-referenced parcel into Agricultural District #10, including all supporting materials, maps, tax map identification documents, and any amendments or supplements to the application.

2. Any records identifying the applicant, including the name and contact information of the individual or entity that submitted the 303-b request.

3. The report and recommendations of the Columbia County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board regarding this application, as required under Agriculture and Markets Law Section 303-b(2)(a), including any supporting documentation, analysis, or deliberative materials prepared by or for the Board.

4. Minutes, agendas, or records of any meeting of the Columbia County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board at which this application was discussed or acted upon.

PART II: PUBLIC HEARING AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION

5. The affidavit of publication from the Hudson Register Star for the notice of the public hearing held on January 5, 2026, including a copy of the notice as published and records indicating the date of publication.

6. Any and all written notices sent to the Town of Chatham regarding this 303-b application, as required under Agriculture and Markets Law Section 303-b(3)(b), including records indicating the date such notice was transmitted, the method of transmission, and to whom it was directed. If no such notice was sent, I request confirmation of that fact in your response.

7. Any and all written notices sent to the NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets regarding this 303-b application, as required under Agriculture and Markets Law Section 303-b(3)(b), including records indicating the date such notice was transmitted and the method of transmission.

8. Minutes, transcripts, audio or video recordings, sign-in sheets, or other records of the public hearing held on January 5, 2026, regarding this application, including any written or oral testimony submitted by any party.

9. The resolution adopted by the Columbia County Board of Supervisors on January 21, 2026, approving the inclusion of this parcel into Agricultural District #10.

10. Any materials submitted or to be submitted to the NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets in connection with this resolution, as required under Agriculture and Markets Law Section 303-b(4), including the resolution, the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board report, and tax map identification numbers and maps.

11. Any certification or response received from the NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets regarding this inclusion, as contemplated under Agriculture and Markets Law Section 303-b(5).

PART III: CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

12. Any correspondence between the Columbia County Board of Supervisors, the Columbia County Planning Department, the Clerk of the Board, or any county official and the applicant, property owner (Edwin and/or Cherie Williams), or their representatives (including attorneys, agents, engineers, or consultants) regarding this 303-b application, the property at 509 Bashford Road, or any agricultural district matter involving this parcel.

13. Any correspondence between any county official and the Town of Chatham, including the Town Supervisor, Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town Clerk, or any town official, regarding this 303-b application or the property at 509 Bashford Road.

14. Any correspondence between any county official and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets regarding this application or this property.

15. Any correspondence between any county official and any member of the public regarding this application or this property.

16. Any inquiries received by any county office or official regarding this property, the agricultural district process as it relates to this property, or the 303-b application, as referenced in the Columbia County Planning Department's response of February 6, 2026.

PART IV: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

17. All emails, text messages, and other electronic communications, whether sent via official county accounts or personal accounts used to conduct county business, that reference, discuss, or relate to any of the following subjects:

a) 509 Bashford Road, Town of Chatham;

b) Tax ID 14.-1-52 (SWIS #102689);

c) Fox Hill Winery, Fox Hill Vineyard, or Fox Hill;

d) Edwin Williams, Cherie Williams, Ed Williams, or any entity associated with them;

e) The inclusion of any parcel in the Town of Chatham into Columbia County Agricultural District #10;

f) Any 303-b application related to land in the Town of Chatham.

18. This request covers communications sent or received by the following county officials and employees, including but not limited to:

a) Patrice Perry, Director, Columbia County Planning Department;

b) Kelly S. Baccaro, Clerk of the Board;

c) All members of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors, including but not limited to Committee Chairman Clifford Weigelt, Supervisor Donal Collins (Town of Chatham), and any supervisor who voted on the January 21, 2026 resolution;

d) All members of the Columbia County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board;

e) Robert Fitzsimmons, County Attorney, and any assistant or deputy county attorney;

f) Kimberly Prince-Walsh, County Attorney's office;

g) Mark Taylor, Real Property;

h) Colleen Lutz, Supervisor;

i) Any other county employee or official who sent or received communications on these subjects.

19. The time period covered by this request is January 1, 2019, through the date of this request.

20. This request includes communications on personal email accounts, personal cell phones, and personal messaging applications (including but not limited to Gmail, Yahoo, iMessage, WhatsApp, Signal, and Facebook Messenger) where those communications relate to official county business concerning the subjects identified in this request. Under New York law, records relating to government business do not lose their status as government records merely because they are maintained on personal devices or accounts.

21. If any official or employee has used a personal account to conduct county business related to these subjects and the county does not currently possess those records, I request that the county direct those individuals to search their personal accounts and produce responsive records, as required under FOIL and as affirmed by New York courts.

22. I also request any records reflecting the county's efforts to search for and collect responsive records, including any directives sent to officials or employees instructing them to search personal accounts.

PART V: RELATED RECORDS

23. Any records related to the Columbia County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board's review of the property at 509 Bashford Road for purposes of determining whether it consists predominantly of "viable agricultural land" as defined in Agriculture and Markets Law Section 301(7), including any site visits, soil assessments, agricultural viability analyses, or related documentation.

24. Any prior 303-b applications, inquiries, or requests for information regarding the inclusion of this parcel into any agricultural district, from any time period.

25. Any records regarding the Columbia County Board of Supervisors' determination, referenced in the January 21, 2026 resolution, that the addition of NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25-AA Agricultural District section 303-b properties to Columbia County Agricultural District nos. 9 and 10 will not have a significant environmental impact and that a negative declaration be issued under SEQR.

26. The complete SEQR record for the January 21, 2026 action, including any Environmental Assessment Form, determination of significance, and any related correspondence or analysis.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

If any portion of this request is denied, I ask that you cite the specific statutory exemption upon which the denial is based and provide the name and address of the person to whom I may direct an appeal. If any records are redacted, please indicate the redaction and the exemption relied upon.

As a journalist, I request that any fees be waived or reduced, as disclosure of this information is in the public interest. If fees cannot be waived, please advise me of the estimated cost before proceeding.

I look forward to your response within five business days, as required by law.

Sincerely,

Joshua Powell
The Powell House Press
(518) 567-8300
josh@thepowellhousepress.com

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